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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/667,034	09/22/2003	James D. Ralph	F-295	1511
51640	7590	06/26/2006	EXAMINER	
SPINE MP LERNER, DAVID, et al. 600 SOUTH AVENUE WEST WESTFIELD, NJ 07090			KIM, JOHN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3733	

DATE MAILED: 06/26/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary**Application No.**

10/667,034

Applicant(s)

RALPH ET AL.

Examiner

John Kim

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE ____ MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 April 2006, 08 August 2005.
 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) 5 and 12 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 6-11 and 13 is/are rejected.
 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/15/05.
 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Claims 5 and 12 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed on 4/7/06.

Applicant's election without traverse of species 4 claims 1-4, 5-11, and 13 in the reply filed on 4/7/06 is acknowledged.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-4, 6-11, and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gross et al (US Pat 5306308) in view of Michelson (US Pat 5609635, cited in PTO-892 dated 2/8/05).

Gross et al. disclose a spacer which have porous surfaces, e.g. porous biocompatible layer 26 or a porous surfaces 27. The spacer includes a beveled edge, e.g. see Figures 1 and 4a. The upper and lower surfaces can be tapered (see Figure 4a). The spacer has at least two marks, e.g. domes 3 and 4. It is noted that the domes mark an central area of the upper and lower surfaces as shown by the figures. The spacer also has an axially medial groove, which can have a constant width (see Figures

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1-3) or be tapered (see Figure 4a). Gross fails to teach having a center that is substantially flat. Michelson discloses having a spacer with a substantially flat surface. The implant is sized to create and maintain the relationship of two adjacent vertebrae of the spine. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the invention of Gross, including a substantially flat center in view of Michelson in order to make the implant fit. Furthermore, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the spinal implant of Gross with a substantially flat center, since applicant has not disclosed that such solve any stated problem or is anything more than one of numerous shapes or configurations a person ordinary skill in the art would find obvious for the purpose of fitting the implant in the patient. In re Dailey and Eilers, 149 USPQ 47 (1966).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 8/8/05 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to Applicant's argument that Gross does not disclose having a substantially flat center is not found persuasive (for claims 1, 4, and 9). As discussed above, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the spinal implant of Gross with a substantially flat center, since applicant has not disclosed that such solve any stated problem or is anything more than one of numerous shapes or configurations a person

ordinary skill in the art would find obvious for the purpose of fitting the implant in the patient. In re Dailey and Eilers, 149 USPQ 47 (1966). Furthermore, the rejection includes an example of an implant with a substantially flat surface. Please see above.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John Kim whose telephone number is (571) 272-2817. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8-4:30.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on (571) 272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

JK 


EDUARDO C. ROBERT
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER